

## Bumps in the Night!!!!

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### Tools of the Trade

#### Smartphone "Ghost" Applications

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As paranormal researchers, our first goal should always be to exhaust all possible explanations before calling anything unknown. This is especially true with audio, video, and photo data that is submitted for review. The sad reality is there are people who will fabricate "evidence" to gain fame, attention, or in some cases just to see who they can get to fall for a fake. One way this is attempted involves using cell phone applications that contain 'ghostly' images that can be placed within the picture.

The purpose for these apps is entertainment. A 'ghostly' pic sent in fun to a friend, a harmless joke revealed upon getting the desired effect, background for wallpaper on phones or computer screensavers--these are some of the intended uses. Unfortunately, some of these pictures are getting submitted to paranormal team's websites, often left to sit there presented as paranormal data until it is noticed and called out.

There are ways to avoid getting taken in by these photos. First and foremost, always question an image that looks too good (or too bad) to be true. This is even more the case if it was taken on a cell phone. EXIF data (Exchangeable Image File Format) is the photo's information that is embedded into the digital image itself. Not every cell phone supports EXIF data, and uploading the photo to some sites, such as Facebook, will destroy the information. If the data can be retrieved from the original photo, it will show if any programs or apps were used in its creation.

Another way to spot these images is to learn as many of them as possible. These apps, which are either free or very cheap and easy to use, are also constantly updated. It saves a lot of time to educate ourselves on as many of these images as possible. There are also apps with even more options that allow for adjusting contours and transparency as well as ones that allow for other images to be added. Asking others for their input can also be helpful, as another set of eyes might recognize the 'ghost'.

Anyone who is searching for answers or proof about the unknown would be over the moon at a genuine piece of unexplainable data. However it should never be at the expense of absolute scrutiny and critical thinking. Always look for the truth.

For further reading:

<http://appadvice.com/appnn/2010/03/spook-your-friends-ghost-capture>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.insasofttech.GhostCam&hl=en>

<http://paranormalsight.webnode.com/phone-photo-apps/> (for many examples of phone 'ghost' apps)

<http://www.cellutips.com/exif-data-is-your-friend/> (information about reading EXIF data)